Public Safety Canada

2017-2018 Review of the National Office for Victims

Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What we examined

The National Office for Victims (NOV) was created in 2005 in response to a review of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* and the resulting *2005 Strengthening Community Safety Initiative* (SCSI). Its purpose was to provide a single point of contact for public enquiries and complaints for victims of federal offenders, as well as to coordinate on policy, communications, and information development with the Correctional Service of Canada and the Parole Board of Canada.[1] The *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* (CVBR) was enacted in 2015 which formally recognized and entrenched victims' rights throughout the criminal justice system. In addition to its roles and responsibilities under the SCSI, the NOV's mandate was expanded in 2015 to align with the CVBR.

The NOV's roles and responsibilities are both operational and strategic in nature and include: responding to public enquiries; providing a "victims' lens" on policy and legislation impacting victims of federal offenders; responding to recommendations of the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime; developing and disseminating public information products, such as *An Information Guide to Assist Victims*; conducting research; and engaging in policy and process development.

The scope of this review focused on the NOV's ability to fulfil its mandate, with particular attention given to program relevance as well as the effectiveness and efficiency of program activities. The review covered the period from 2012-13 to 2016-17.

What we found

Relevance

There is a continuing need for Public Safety (PS) to remain engaged in victims' issues and awareness-raising activities. Over the course of the review, the interviews conducted with partners and stakeholders demonstrated a varied understanding of the NOV's mandate and priorities. Synergies with other federal initiatives were attributed to the NOV's strategic activities, while overlap was found in its operational activities, such as having a toll-free line.

The review concluded that the NOV has complied with three of its four mandated responsibilities under the CVBR. The fourth obligation – a research project to explore victims' needs and inform outreach activities – is underway.

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[1] While the NOV primarily coordinates with the Correctional Service of Canada and the Parole Board of Canada, leading up to and following the passage of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, its responsibilities within the Public Safety Portfolio have broadened to include coordination with other member organizations such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canada Border Services Agency.

Performance

Partners placed value on the NOV's strategic role citing, for example, the program's provision of a "victims' lens" on policy and legislation impacting victims of federal offenders. In its operational role, the demand for the NOV's direct public services, such as operating the toll-free line, was low. While victims are often referred to the NOV's publications, partners and stakeholders indicated they do not refer victims to the office itself for information.

The review found that the NOV has met its legislated and corporate reporting requirements. However, over the time-period under review, performance data was not always collected in a consistent or systematic manner, and what was collected focused on the activities and some outputs included in the logic model, rather than program outcomes.

Interviewees indicated that the higher workload attributed to some of the NOV's strategic activities, for example on policy and legislative development, has a corresponding and limiting impact upon other mandated responsibilities such as the development of new information products and outreach strategies. Moreover, while interviewees noted strengths in certain program areas, for example in the NOV's strategic activities, alternatives to the existing model that could benefit the program in meeting its objectives and enhance and simplify the provision of victims' services in the PS Portfolio were suggested.

Recommendations

The Assistant Deputy Minister of the Community Safety and Countering Crime Branch should:

1. Clarify the NOV's mandate and priorities in line with Public Safety Canada's role in victims' services, and ensure appropriate resources and governance to support the scope of its activities.
2. Strengthen the NOV's performance measurement and data collection practices (including outcome-oriented performance indicators), and ensure accurate, timely reporting for decision making.

Management Response and Action Plan

Management accepts all recommendations and will implement an action plan.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of Public Safety Canada's 2017-18 Review of the National Office for Victims (NOV). There have been no prior evaluations of the NOV conducted by Public Safety Canada.

2. PROFILE

2.1 Background

Corrections and conditional release (parole) are governed by the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA). In 2000 the CCRA underwent parliamentary review which resulted in the 2005 *Strengthening Community Safety Initiative* (SCSI). The SCSI introduced several measures intended to enable the Federal Government to more effectively address the needs of victims of federal offenders within the correctional and conditional release system.[2] A key measure was the establishment of the NOV as a centralized and coordinating mechanism for victims of federal offenders within Public Safety (PS). Its purpose was to provide a single point of contact for public enquiries and complaints, as well as coordination on policy, communications, and information development with the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) and the Parole Board of Canada (PBC).[3]

Continuing the efforts to support victims of crime, the Federal Government established the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime (OFOVC) and launched the Federal Victims Strategy (FVS) led by the Department of Justice in 2007. In 2010, the SCSI was renewed and the NOV's funding was made permanent. The 2015 enactment of the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights* (CVBR) formally recognized and entrenched victims' rights throughout the criminal justice system. In addition to its roles and responsibilities under the SCSI, the NOV's mandate was expanded to include additional responsibilities under the CVBR.

The scope of the NOV's mandate includes both operational and strategic roles and responsibilities. In its operational role the program provides direct services to the public by responding to general enquiries and by providing referrals to victims requesting specific information about the federal offenders who harmed them. It also engages in outreach activities such as public awareness raising and stakeholder engagement with victims' advocacy groups. These activities include disseminating information products, collaborating with the PCVI for National Victims and Survivors of Crime Week and, more recently, hosting annual roundtables in 2016-17 and 2017-18 to raise stakeholder and victim awareness of victims' rights provided through the CVBR.

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[2] A federal offender is defined as a person serving a sentence of two or more years.

[3] While the NOV primarily coordinates with the Correctional Service of Canada and the Parole Board of Canada, leading up to and following the passage of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, its responsibilities within the Public Safety Portfolio have broadened to include coordination with other member organizations such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canada Border Services Agency.

In its strategic role the NOV undertakes policy and coordination activities which require engagement with partners and stakeholders within the Portfolio and across government (e.g. the Department of Justice and Provinces and Territories). These activities include: coordinating Portfolio responses to OFOVC annual reports; corporate reporting; providing a "victims' lens" on policy and legislation impacting victims of federal offenders; developing information products for the public; coordinating working groups with other federal partners; and providing input on the development of communications and training materials with PS Portfolio partners.

The NOV is managed within the Countering Crime and Community Safety Branch's (CSCCB) Corrections and Criminal Justice Unit at PS. However, as mandated by the SCSI, the program is physically co-located with the Policy Centre for Victim Issues (PCVI) in the Department of Justice. The intended purpose of co-location is to compliment the work being done by PCVI and to provide a nexus between PS and the Department of Justice as both departments share responsibilities outlined in the SCSI.

2.2 Resources

The following table illustrates the NOV's funding allocations from fiscal year 2012-13 to 2016-17. Detailed financial information, including allocated, planned and actual expenditure, is included in Annex B.

Table 1 – NOV Funding Allocations

	Allocation ($)		
Year	**Salary***	**O&M**	**Total**
2012-2013	240,595	159,405	**400,000**
2013-2014	240,595	159,405	**400,000**
2014-2015	240,595	159,405	**400,000**
2015-2016	350,595	159,405	**510,000**
2016-2017	360,595	159,405	**520,000**
Total	**1,432,975**	**797,025**	**2,230,000**

Data Source: NOV

*Salary figures include Employee Benefit Plan (EBP) (20%) and Accommodations (13%)

2.3 Logic Model

The 2014 logic model found in Annex A illustrates the activities and outputs needed to contribute towards the fulfilment of the NOV's long-term objective that victims and their families are confident in the criminal justice system. This objective is facilitated through the achievement of the following intermediate outcomes:

- victims and their families are satisfied with the response to their enquiries;
- victims of crime are informed about and use the services made available to them, if needed; and
- the perspective of the victim is reflected in corrections policy where applicable.

In 2017-18 the program revised its performance measurement strategy to align with the 2016 Treasury Board (TB) *Policy on Results*. The program's new Performance Information Profile (PIP) commits the NOV to reaching the long-term objective that victim's rights to information are upheld. This objective is facilitated through the new intermediate outcome: victims are informed about services that are available to them. Work is ongoing to implement its new performance indicators.

3. ABOUT THE REVIEW

3.1 Objective and Scope

The objective of the review was to provide senior management with an evidence-based, neutral assessment of the relevance and performance (effectiveness, efficiency and economy) of the NOV. The review examined both the operational and strategic activities of the NOV from 2012-13 to 2016-17.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Review Core Issues

The review took a delivery evaluation approach which looked at the implementation of the NOV, as well as the achievement of outputs. As there was limited data on the outcomes identified in the logic model, the review focused primarily on the program's operational and strategic activities.

Table 2 – Review Topics and Core Issues

Review Topics	Core Issues
Relevance	• Continuing need. • Alignment with federal government priorities and departmental outcomes. • Alignment with the CVBR. • Synergies or overlap with other federal government initiatives.
Performance – Effectiveness	• Effectiveness of the program's strategic activities. • Effectiveness of the program's operational activities.
Performance – Efficiency and Economy	• Capacity and mandate fulfilment. • Alternative models for consideration.

3.2.2 Lines of Evidence

Data collection for the review occurred from September 2017 to December 2017 and included the following lines of evidence:

- **Document Review:** Relevant documents were reviewed to assess the alignment of the NOV with federal priorities, departmental outcomes and the CVBR, as well as program effectiveness. Documents reviewed include the following: Speeches from the Throne, corporate documents such as Reports on Plans and Priorities, performance data,

inception documents and accountability and policy documents. A list of documents reviewed is provided in Annex C.

- **Key Informant Interviews:** Sixteen interviews were conducted with program staff and management as well as representatives from partner agencies in the Portfolio[4] and Justice Canada.[5] Subject matter experts (SMEs) were also interviewed and included victims' advocates and an academic specializing in the field of victimology. Interviews focused on the overall efficacy and continuing relevance of the program in both its operational and strategic capacities.

3.3 Limitations

- The quality and availability of performance information provided by program management was limited. Where performance information was lacking, the evaluation team supplemented the data with analysis drawn from interviews and document review.
- Victims and survivors of crime were not interviewed or surveyed due to ethical and privacy concerns. The victims' perspective was therefore limited to insight provided through stakeholder and SME interviews.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Relevance

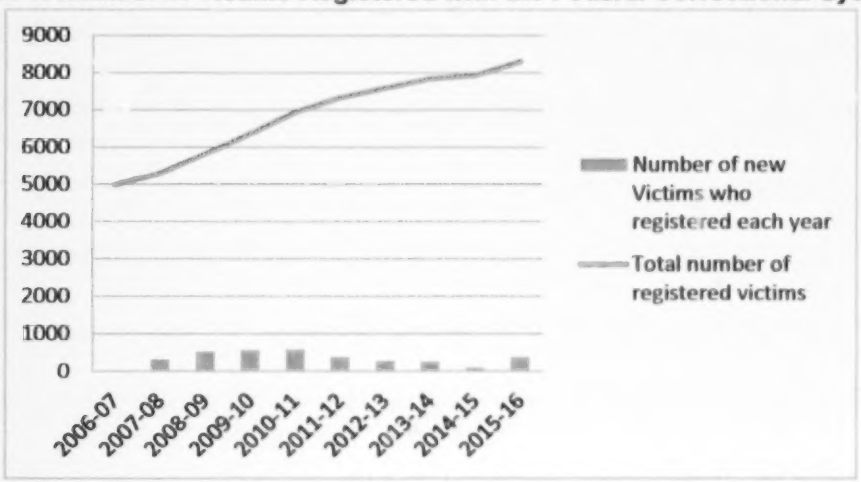
4.1.1 Continuing Need

There is a continuing need for PS to remain engaged in victims' issues and awareness-raising activities. However, understanding of the NOV's mandated roles and responsibilities is unclear and the necessity of some of the program's operational activities is uncertain.

Document review revealed that the number of victims who have registered with the federal correctional system has increased 60% over the past 10 years, from a cumulative total of 4,979 in 2006-07, to 8,303 by 2015-16 (Figure 1). The cumulative rise in victim registration is not necessarily an indication of increasing crime rates, but instead, is an indication that more victims of crime are utilizing the services provided by the PS Portfolio. This steadily increasing demand suggests there is a continuing need for the provision of victims' services within the Portfolio as well as public outreach to continue making victims aware of available services.

[4] CSC, PBC, and CBSA.
[5] PCVI and the OFOVC.

Figure 1. Number of Victims Registered with the Federal Correctional System.[6]



The majority of interviewees felt that PS should remain a key player in victims' issues. They noted the introduction of *survivor* into the lexicography and further noted that the definition of victim and survivor has evolved to include those adversely impacted by natural disasters, mass violence, human trafficking, cyber-attacks, and crime encountered abroad. While these areas fall outside of the NOV's mandate, they speak to the shifting and evolving landscape that informs current conversations on victims issues; both the NOV and PS make important contributions within this environment.

Policies around issues and services that impact victims of crime have also evolved in the past five years. Notably, the CVBR was enacted in 2015, with certain sections coming into force in 2016. This legislation expanded the NOV's responsibilities to include CVBR-specific awareness raising and outreach activities as well as the establishment of a complaints mechanism to respond to victims who feel their rights under the Bill have been violated. The CCRA has also been amended following the enactment of the CVBR. Interviewees noted the NOV's valuable input provided during the development of the CVBR, particularly in terms of policy advice regarding victims' issues, liaison work with partners, and drafting memos to the minister. Efforts to raise awareness about the rights of victims under this new legislation are ongoing by the NOV and other partners.

Specific concerns were raised during interviews with partners and SMEs as to whether the NOV's provision of direct services benefits victims of crime and the general public, or if it adds an extra layer to an already complex field of service provision. While the SCSI requires the NOV to offer a single point of contact for public enquiries, data show that the NOV's current activities may no longer be the best approach to meet this requirement. For example, three other federal partners (CSC, PBC, and OFOVC) also operate toll-free numbers for victims to submit enquiries, issue complaints, or request information. CSC and PBC both have notably higher call volumes given their responsibilities to provide various notifications to registered victims. The

[6] https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/ccrso-2016/index-en.aspx#f

number of contacts[7] the NOV has directly with victims each year is low, with 179 contacts with victims or the public reported by the NOV in 2015-16. In addition to the toll-free line, the program engages in other outreach activities (e.g. publications and website). However, in the absence of reliable data it is unclear what impact these activities have had in raising awareness of victims' rights and of the services available to victims of federal offenders. This raises questions concerning both the relevance and necessity of the NOV's operational activities.

A general lack of awareness over the program's mandate and priorities emerged as a dominant theme. One informant described the NOV's role as primarily strategic, providing "policy support and coordination" within PS and among portfolio partners. Another described the opposite, suggesting the NOV is an operational program with only a small policy component. In other interviews and program documents, the NOV was described primarily as the ministerial secretariat for victims' issues or "a Centre of Expertise on issues related to and impacting victims of crime."[8] Clarity on what is meant by a 'Centre of Expertise' in this context was not provided in program documentation reviewed. Such varied perceptions among partners and stakeholders present challenges when considering relevance and necessity. All informants agreed that they see value in the NOV and feel the program is engaged in many activities; however, there is a lack of clarity and shared understanding of its mandate and priorities.

4.1.2 Alignment with Federal Government Priorities and Departmental Outcomes

The activities of the NOV support Public Safety's objectives of countering crime and keeping Canadians safe.

Both the 2011 and 2013 Speeches from the Throne (SFT) prioritized the interests of victims of crime and committed the government to providing support for victims' rights. In the 2013 SFT, this commitment included the introduction of a Victims Bill of Rights to "restore victims to their rightful place at the heart of our justice system."[9]

The 2015 SFT and the 2016 Budget committed to the provision of greater security and opportunity for Canadians. Specific initiatives to support various groups of victims have been prioritized, including the introduction of new legislation to provide greater support to survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence,[10] and supporting shelters for victims of violence, particularly for Indigenous women and girls who are overrepresented as victims of violence.[11] Restorative justice has also been stated as a priority, with consideration given to gaps in service

[7] 'Contacts' refers to the number of follow-ups made with victims in response to calls received on the toll-free line, emails, or letters. One person may have multiple contacts.
[8] As described in the 2016-17 NOV Budget and Costed Work Plan.
[9] 2013 Speech from the Throne: https://lop.parl.ca/ParlInfo/Documents/ThroneSpeech/41-2-e.html
[10] 2015 Speech from the Throne: https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/pco-bcp/documents/pm/speech_from_the_throne.pdf
[11] Growing the Middle Class, Government of Canada Budget 2016: https://www.budget.gc.ca/2016/docs/plan/budget2016-en.pdf

to Indigenous Peoples and those with mental illness through the criminal justice system.[12] It should be noted, however, that under the SCSI, the NOV is specifically mandated to assist victims of federal offenders.

Organizationally, PS victims' services fall under the departmental priority of countering crime. Crime was identified as one of many threats to public security in the 2015 Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Mandate Letter; to this end, the department has maintained its focus on increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of crime prevention, policing, and corrections.[13]

4.1.3 Alignment with the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*

To date, the NOV has complied with three of its four commitments under the CVBR. The fourth requirement, a research project, is underway.

The 2015 CVBR was the first victims' bill of rights to be enacted in Canada at the federal level. Therefore, alignment with its objectives is a new consideration for federal partners, including the NOV. Four requirements for the NOV were established under the CVBR: a research project to explore victims' needs and inform outreach activities; development and dissemination of new and easily accessible information on the CVBR and how victims can access their rights and remedies in the corrections system; policy and process development, such as addressing recommendations from the OFOVC and establishing a complaints mechanism to adequately respond to victims' rights under the CVBR; and outreach with victims of federal offenders, victim advocates, and other key stakeholders. The program has complied with three of these four requirements. The research project is underway.

The NOV identifies itself as a "single, national point of contact for victims who have concerns about offenders and questions about the federal correctional system and the Canadian justice system,"[14] and operates a toll-free number which victims can call to request information about services available to them. This addresses Section 6 of the CVBR by providing victims access to information on the criminal justice system and the role of victims in it, services and programs available to them, as well as the victim's right to file a complaint should their rights under the *Act* be denied or infringed upon. The NOV tracks all calls received, including those related to the CVBR since this legislation came into force. However, due to the personal information retained in the call logs, disaggregated data was not available for analysis at the time of this review. According to program management, the NOV is currently reviewing its performance data in order to be able to present this information in a disaggregated way which meets government privacy requirements. The NOV also provides referrals to CSC and PBC if victims contact the program requesting information related to their offender (Section 8 of the CVBR). This

[12] 2015 Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Mandate Letter: https://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-public-safety-and-emergency-preparedness-mandate-letter

[13] This has been included as a top priority for Public Safety in the Report on Plans and Priorities for the last three years (2014-15 to 2016-17).

[14] As defined on the Public Safety Website: https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/crrctns/vctms-ssstnc-en.aspx

mechanism ensures that victims' right to information is addressed; however, the number and type of referrals for victim-specific enquiries are not tracked by the NOV. Moreover, partner agencies could not confirm how many victim enquiries have been referred to them by the NOV. As such, assessment of effectiveness for this operational activity was not possible.

The NOV further complies with its CVBR-mandated obligation to provide information to victims by producing publications such as the *Overview of Federal Corrections and Criminal Justice Victim-Centered Information and Assistance*[15] and *Preparing Victims for the Release of a Federal Offender.*[16] The NOV's most widely distributed publications, *An Information Guide to Assist Victims,*[17] and the smaller, pocket-sized *Victims of Crime: Staying Informed*[18] were updated in fiscal year 2015-16 to reflect changes brought about by the CVBR. These guides now include information on how to make a complaint under the CVBR. An information poster was also developed by the NOV to outline the various rights outlined in the CVBR.[19] The poster provides victims with an overview of how to exercise their rights throughout the criminal justice system. Information products are publicly available on the NOV's website, can be requested through the program's toll-free number or email address, and are distributed by partner agencies and victims' advocacy groups. They are available in both official languages, and *Victims of Crime: Staying Informed* has been translated into an additional 18 languages.[20]

To streamline processes and allow for greater clarity and consistency among complaint resolution mechanisms, the NOV led the ad hoc working group on CVBR complaint resolution mechanisms with portfolio partners and PCVI, which met twice in 2016-17.[21] This working group responded to a recommendation made by the OFOVC in her 2015-16 Annual Report, which stated that a single complaints mechanism should be created and used by the PS Portfolio to simplify the process for victims. While Section 25(3) of the CVBR requires each organization to establish its own mechanism, the working group committed to clarifying and streamlining processes, and ensuring PS Portfolio complaints mechanisms are aligned. To this end, the NOV is tasked with coordinating complaints involving multiple portfolio agencies. There have been no founded complaints against the NOV to date.

Lastly, the NOV also hosts annual CVBR roundtables with stakeholders and partner organizations to discuss the four rights of the victim supported under the Bill. The NOV has held two such roundtables to date, with 14 and 20 participants at each, respectively. They have been well-received by participants and have led to initiatives to streamline and align processes among partners, such as best practices for information sharing. Interviewees indicated that

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[15] https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/vrvw-vctm-cntrd-nfrmtn-ssstnc/index-en.aspx
[16] https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/prprng-vctms-rls-fdrl-ffndr/index-en.aspx
[17] https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/2016-gd-ssst-vctms/index-en.aspx
[18] https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/vctms-crm-stying-nfrmd/index-en.aspx
[19] https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/vrvw-vctm-bll-rghts/index-en.aspx
[20] *Victims of Crime: Staying Informed* is available in: Arabic, Cantonese (Chinese Simplified), Denesuline, English/French, Innu Aimun, Inuktitut, Italian, Korean, Mandarin (Chinese Traditional), Mi'kmaq, Oji-Cree, Ojibway, Plains Cree, Punjabi, Persian, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog and Urdu.
[21] While outside of the time period for this review, the complaints working group continued to meet in 2017-18.

while awareness of the CVBR has increased, implementation is ongoing to date, and work continues to ensure victims are informed of their rights.

4.1.4 Synergy/Overlap with Other Federal Government Initiatives

Synergies and complementarity were found in the NOV's strategic activities with partners and stakeholders, while overlaps with other federal government initiatives were identified at the operational level. Some of the program's operational activities add an extra layer of service delivery to victims.

The federal services currently provided to victims of crime involve complex processes that often include multiple agencies, departments and jurisdictions. While some examples of synergy and complementarity have been identified, stakeholders and partners agree that the overlapping array of service models across the government can be confusing and frustrating for victims to navigate.

Synergy with other government initiatives was identified through the NOV's strategic activities. Interviewees specifically mentioned appreciation for the NOV's work with the PS policy office and portfolio partners on new legislation (e.g. the CVBR) and amendments to existing legislation (e.g. recent amendments to the CCRA) and the NOV-led working group on complaints. It was noted that through its involvement in this working group, PCVI learned from the PS Portfolio's approach to streamline and formalize its own complaints mechanisms.

The National Victims Advisory Committee (NVAC), co-chaired by the NOV and PCVI, was another initiative cited as facilitating positive synergies between partners and stakeholders. This advisory committee addressed gaps in the provision of federal victims' services by increasing communication and input on victims' issues from players at all levels of government, as well as victims' advocacy groups and SMEs. The NVAC has not been active since 2013 and was disbanded in 2017.

It was further noted that the NOV enhances synergies between the PS Portfolio and the OFOVC by coordinating responses and collaborating with this key federal player on behalf of the Portfolio. The NOV also supports the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS) through the provision of works-in-progress reviews.[22]

Interviewees identified that because there are multiple federal departments and agencies working on victims' issues, it can be challenging to come to a consensus on partners' roles.[23] Non-governmental interviewees indicated that having this number of players involved at the

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[22] The CCJS work-in-progress review process allows stakeholders to review *Juristat* articles for accuracy, coherence and interpretability prior to publication. https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/about/cr/ccjsp

[23] Key federal players working in the area of victims' issues include Public Safety Canada, Public Safety Portfolio agencies (CSC, PBC, RCMP, and CBSA), the Department of Justice (PCVI), and the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime (OFOVC), and Employment and Social Development Canada who administers the Parents of Murdered or Missing Children grant.

federal level is confusing for victims. For the sake of the victim, it was suggested that better coordination is needed between partners.

Examples of duplication identified by the review include the NOV's toll-free number and publications. Toll-free numbers for victims are also operated by CSC and PBC to provide information to victims. Both agencies also produce their own publications, as does PCVI. The OFOVC produces publications as well and responds to public enquiries through its own toll-free number. While addressing victims' needs is a federal priority and responsibility, it was noted that given the multiple avenues for dissemination and service providers, victims may experience confusion over where to go for information, which is the best or correct number to call for their enquiry, and which information is most accurate.

4.2 Performance—Effectiveness

4.2.1 Strategic Component

The NOV's strategic activities are valued by partners. However, the program has indicated it has faced challenges in developing new information products and outreach strategies.

In terms of strategic achievements, partners placed value on the NOV's provision of a "victims' lens" on policy and legislation impacting victims of federal offenders. One such example was the program's contribution to the development of the CVBR and revisions to the CCRA. Another area of strength cited by interviewees was the NOV's coordination of working groups, particularly the recent CVBR complaints working group. Informants noted that it is important to know what other agencies are doing and that the NOV engenders a neutral space for information sharing. The facilitation of stakeholder engagement through, for example, the recent CVBR Victims' Roundtables was also deemed important and successful. That said, the program has indicated it has faced challenges in developing new information products and outreach strategies. These challenges are discussed below in 4.3.1.

4.2.2 Operational Component

Beyond the NOV's dissemination of information products, the program's operational role remains unclear and underutilized. Awareness and visibility of its other direct services is limited.

The distribution of information products constitutes the program's most substantial operational activity. Between fiscal years 2013-14 to 2016-17, the program disseminated 12,356, 17,843, 10,999 and 15,365 information products, respectively.[24] Apart from its dissemination role, the demand for the NOV's direct services is quite low. While victims are often referred to the NOV's publications, partners and stakeholders indicated they do not refer victims to the office itself for

[24] Data was not provided for fiscal year 2012-2013.

information. It was suggested that there is a correlation between the amount of publications disseminated by the NOV and the volume of public enquiries received; however, data does not support such a correlation, and the number of contacts the NOV has with victims remains consistently low in comparison to other federal partners.

Interviewees further noted that the NOV possesses a low profile amongst partners in terms of the services they provide directly to victims. This suggests that current outreach strategies may not be effective in generating public awareness or partner/stakeholder consensus and validation of its operational roles.

4.3 Performance—Efficiency and Economy

4.3.1 Fulfillment of Mandate

Gaps in program outputs suggest that the NOV's mandate is unfulfilled; resources are directed to priority areas at the expense of others.

Interviews and document review identified gaps in the NOV's delivery of its mandated roles and responsibilities. These gaps include limitations on the NOV's ability to conduct outreach and develop communications and outreach strategies as well as new or updated information products.

The review found that the NOV has met its legislated and corporate reporting requirements. In 2014, the NOV developed a performance measurement strategy. In 2016 the *Policy on Results* came into force and provided revised guidelines for departmental monitoring and reporting on performance. The NOV has provided its input into the new PIP. Performance data was provided for the review; however, data was not tracked in some of the areas requested. It was found that, over the time-period under review, performance data was not always collected in a consistent or systematic manner, and what was collected focused on the activities and some outputs included in the logic model, rather than program outcomes.

Coordinating on policy and legislative activities, or corporate taskings, such as preparation of ministerial correspondence, is often ad-hoc, time-sensitive and places significant demands on available resources. It was noted that there was higher workload attributed to these activities which has a corresponding and limiting impact upon other mandated responsibilities, such as the program's ability to develop information products and develop and implement outreach strategies. Some activities, such as providing work-in-progress reviews for the CCJS, were acknowledged as existing outside of the mandate, but important in terms of being a collaborative federal partner. The NOV contributed feedback to six such reports in fiscal year 2015-16.

Interviewees also attributed staffing issues such as turnover, training and retention to creating transitional challenges that were viewed as adversely impacting outreach, continuity and corporate memory. Further, it was suggested that the physical location of the NOV at the

Department of Justice, while creating synergies with PCVI, produces internal challenges for PS such as diminished program visibility and opportunities for collaboration within the department.

4.3.2 Alternative Models

While interviewees noted strengths in certain program areas, for example in the NOV's strategic activities, alternatives to the existing model that could benefit PS in meeting its objectives and enhance victim functions within the PS Portfolio were suggested.

According to literature review and interviewees, Canada is among the leaders working to address victims' rights during the corrections and conditional release phases of the criminal justice system. It was one of the first countries to develop and implement an electronic Victims Portal for use by victims who have registered with the CSC and/or PBC.[25] Therefore, no alternative models of service delivery were identified in other countries through literature review. Suggestions and observations were made by interviewees, however, which could position the NOV to better respond to the needs of victims.

Firstly, while the NOV's current co-location with PCVI may afford greater collaboration between the two, interviewees were split on whether or not the disadvantages of the physical distance between the PS and the NOV outweigh the benefits of being close to the PCVI. As the NOV is mandated to coordinate victims' issues and services within the PS Portfolio which is mainly focused on corrections and conditional release, interviewees from PS indicated that having the office relocated could increase visibility and coordination within the department and could provide increased opportunity for collaboration with other PS policy groups and internal services.

Secondly, SMEs and other interviewees broadly agreed that the creation of a 'one-stop-shop' for victim services within the Portfolio, or more widely, within the government would be beneficial for both victims and federal partners. A siloed approach – currently taken with respect to the provision of victims' services – can require victims to make multiple contacts with different agencies throughout the process. It also increases workload and duplications amongst partners, and increases the risk of inconsistent information being provided to victims. Streamlining this approach could involve consolidating all victims' services into one organization or office to reduce the burden on individual agencies, and alleviate confusion for victims. Given current obligations under the SCSI and CVBR, such a model may not be feasible.

Instead, a suggestion to establish NOV as a PS Portfolio Centre of Expertise for victim's issues was raised by portfolio partners. Under this alternative model, the operational expertise would remain with the agencies, with NOV focused on strategic roles and responsibilities, including reporting to the Minister and Parliament on PS Portfolio victims' functions, coordinating the development of information publications and outreach for the Portfolio, and providing a "victims' lens" to all new policy and legislative initiatives. A Centre of Expertise model could also be

[25] "Development for the Victims Portal was completed by CSC during fiscal year 2015–16. It was launched on June 1st, 2016. http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/publications/005007-4500-2015-2016-eng.shtml

expanded to include a grants and contribution program to promote community projects in support of victims' needs. Positioning the NOV under this type of model would ensure victims services across the Portfolio are supported through strong research and clear direction from the Minister.

There was wide consensus among interviewees that any potential model or program revision must give careful consideration to the needs of victims and seek to simplify the provision of victims' services in the PS Portfolio and the federal government.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Relevance

There is a continuing need for PS to remain engaged in victims' issues and awareness-raising activities. However, at the program level there is a lack of clarity and shared understanding of the NOV's mandate and priorities. Synergies with other federal initiatives were attributed to the NOV's strategic activities, while overlap was found in its operational activities, such as having a toll-free line.

The NOV complies with three of its four mandated responsibilities under the CVBR. The fourth obligation – a research project to explore victims' needs and inform outreach activities – is underway.

5.2 Performance—Effectiveness

Partners placed value on the NOV's strategic role citing, for example, the program's provision of a "victims' lens" on policy and legislation impacting victims of federal offenders. In its operational role, the demand for the NOV's direct public services, such as operating the toll-free line, was low. While victims are often referred to the NOV's publications, partners and stakeholders indicated they do not refer victims to the office itself for information.

5.3 Performance—Efficiency and Economy

The review found that the NOV has met its legislated and corporate reporting requirements. However, over the time-period under review, performance data was not always collected in a consistent or systematic manner, and what was collected focused on the activities and some outputs included in the logic model, rather than program outcomes.

Interviewees indicated that the higher workload attributed to some of the NOV's strategic activities, for example on policy and legislative development, has a corresponding and limiting impact upon other mandated responsibilities such as the development of new information products and outreach strategies.

Moreover, while interviewees noted strengths in certain program areas, for example in the NOV's strategic activities, alternatives to the existing model that could benefit the program in meeting its objectives and enhance and simplify the provision of victims' services in the PS Portfolio were suggested.

Firstly, interviewees felt that having the office relocated within PS could increase visibility and coordination with portfolio partners, and would provide increased opportunity for collaboration with other PS policy groups and internal services.

Secondly, SMEs agreed that the creation of a 'one-stop-shop' for victim services within the Portfolio, or more widely across the Federal government, would be beneficial for both victims and federal partners. Streamlining this approach could involve consolidating all victims' services into one organization or office to reduce the burden on individual agencies and alleviate confusion for victims. Given current obligations under the SCSI and CVBR, such a model may not be feasible.

Instead, a third suggestion to establish NOV as a PS Portfolio Centre of Expertise for victim's issues was raised by portfolio partners. Under this model, the NOV could focus on providing strategic support to the Portfolio, such as providing policy or legislative advice on new initiatives, reporting to the Minister and Parliament on victim functions within the Portfolio, and coordinating with partner agencies on the development of information products and outreach strategies.

There was wide consensus among interviewees that careful consideration to the needs of victims must be given and any prospective model should simplify the provision of victims' services in the PS Portfolio and the federal government.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Assistant Deputy Minister of the Community Safety and Countering Crime Branch should:

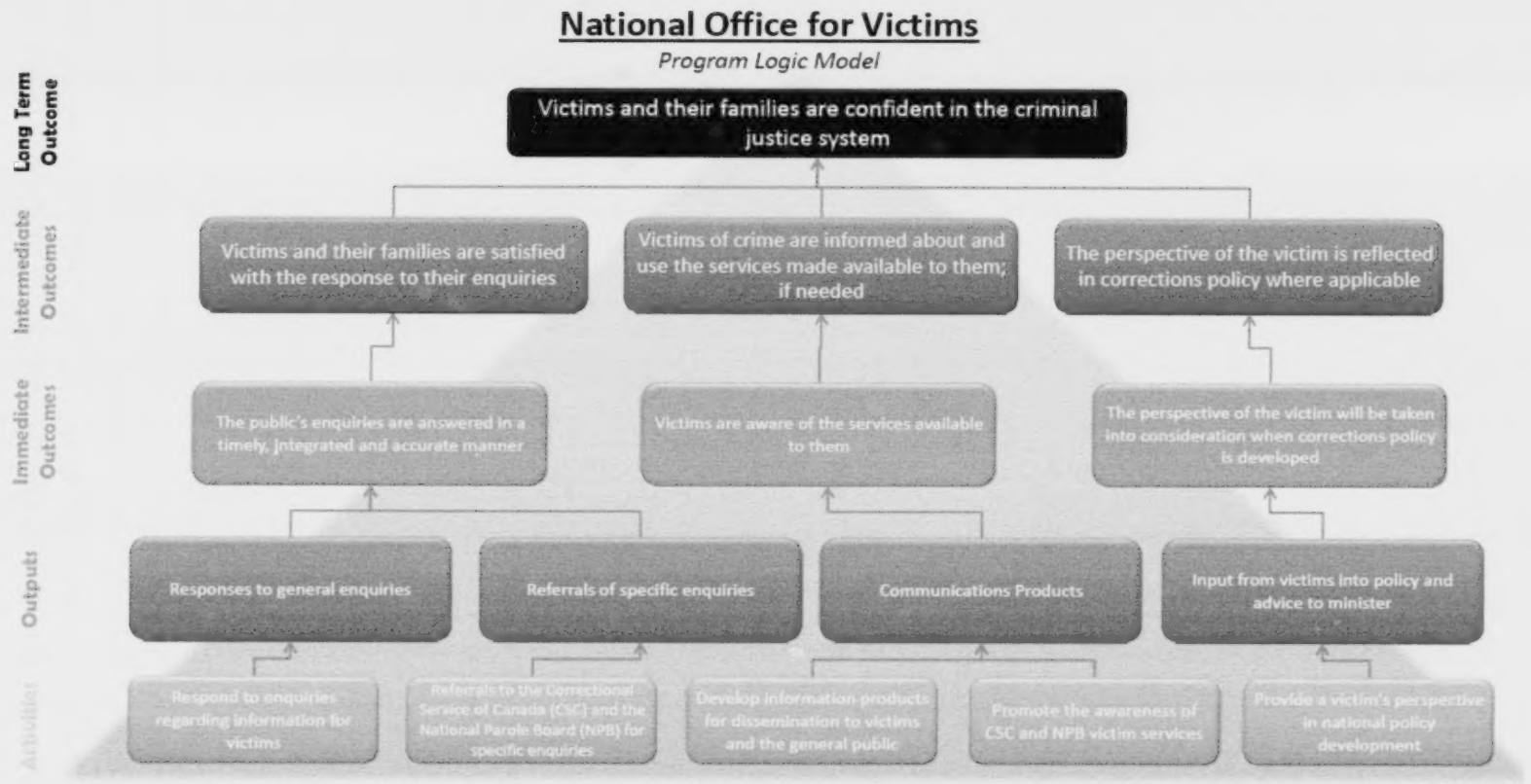
1. Clarify the NOV's mandate and priorities in line with Public Safety Canada's role in victims' services and ensure appropriate resources and governance to support the scope of its activities.
2. Strengthen the NOV's performance measurement and data collection practices (including outcome-oriented performance indicators), and ensure accurate, timely reporting for decision making.

7. MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN

Management accepts all recommendations and will implement an action plan.

Recommendation	Action Planned	Planned Completion Date
Clarify the NOV's mandate and priorities in line with Public Safety Canada's role in victims' services and ensure appropriate resources and governance to support the scope of its activities.	Undertake a fundamental review of NOV's mandate, activities, and priorities in consideration of NOV's legislative authority, within the context of the victim service priorities of the Department. The review will aim to demonstrate ways to reduce redundancies between the portfolio partners, provide a proactive, rather than reactive focus for the NOV, and allow the NOV to better support the Branch and Department.	July 2019
	Review and refine NOV outreach activities to better promote the services of NOV Undertake stakeholder survey to better understand effective outreach strategies to promote services to victims of federal offenders and refine current efforts as required.	September 2018
	Continue NOV's indigenous outreach research project, which will allow NOV to determine how it can better serve the needs of indigenous communities, in particular, how it can better meet the information needs for indigenous victims of crime	December 2018
	Pending review of NOV's mandate, conduct a review of NOV's annual funding allocation to ensure it can deliver on its clarified mandate and priorities	December 2019
Strengthen the NOV's performance measurement and data collection practices (including outcome-oriented performance indicators), and ensure accurate, timely reporting for decision making	Finalize the in progress Performance Information Profile to reflect NOV's mandate and priorities	August 2018
	Establish NOV data collection baselines, mechanisms and procedures in line with the Performance Information Profile	December 2018

ANNEX A: PROGRAM LOGIC MODEL


National Office for Victims
Program Logic Model
Long Term Outcome
Victims and their families are confident in the criminal justice system
Intermediate Outcomes
Victims and their families are satisfied with the response to their enquiries
Victims of crime are informed about and use the services made available to them, if needed
The perspective of the victim is reflected in corrections policy where applicable
Immediate Outcomes
The public's enquiries are answered in a timely, integrated and accurate manner
Victims are aware of the services available to them
The perspective of the victim will be taken into consideration when corrections policy is developed
Outputs
Responses to general enquiries
Referrals of specific enquiries
Communications Products
Input from victims into policy and advice to minister
Activities
Respond to enquiries regarding information for victims
Referrals to the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) and the National Parole Board (NPB) for specific enquiries
Develop information products for dissemination to victims and the general public
Promote the awareness of CSC and NPB victim services
Provide a victim's perspective in national policy development

ANNEX B: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The amounts below represent allocated, planned and actual expenditures for the program.

	Allocation ($)			Planned Spending ($)			Expenditures ($)		
Year	Salary*	O&M	Total	Salary*	O&M	Total	Salary*‡	O&M	Total
2012-2013	240,595	159,405	**400,000**	262,257	105,445	**367,702**	401,000	110,489	**511,489**
2013-2014	240,595	159,405	**400,000**	263,371	85,635	**349,006**	418,000	78,992	**496,992**
2014-2015	240,595	159,405	**400,000**	264,545	86,500	**351,045**	365,000	81,392	**446,392**
2015-2016	350,595	159,405	**510,000**	**	86,500	**86,500**	430,000	100,644	**530,644**
2016-2017	360,595	159,405	**520,000**	**	67,600	**67,600**	447,000	71,991	**518,991**
Total	**1,432,975**	**797,025**	**2,230,000**	**790,173**	**431,680**	**1,221,853**	**2,061,000**	**443,508**	**2,504,508**

Data Source: NOV

Note: Salary expenditures DO NOT include 100% of salary of PM-05 that was assigned annually to NOV but paid out of another cost centre for the fiscal year 2012-13 until 2014-15

*Salary includes EPB (20%) and Accommodations (13%)

** The NOV's cost centre was removed in 2015-16. Notional budget allocations are no longer provided to the program.

‡Salary expenditures are rounded to the nearest thousand.

ANNEX C: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

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